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## Poloncarz Vindicated by Geoff Kelly



Two weeks ago in this space, we faulted Erie County Executive **Chris Collins** for siccing his campaign spokesman on Erie County Comptroller **Mark Poloncarz** when Poloncarz sought better terms for the county's regular short-term borrowing. Collins has asked the legislature to approve borrowing through the **Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority** immediately and was vexed when the legislature instead authorized Poloncarz to take time to see if he could save money by borrowing through his office. To express his vexation, the Republican Collins trotted out his campaign spokesman, **Stefan Mychajliw**, to lambaste his Democratic rival in November's election with the sort of empty, incendiary accusations that typify campaign-speak—the kind of talk that makes our elections embarrassing spectacles and that has no place in governance.

As it turns out, Poloncarz was right to go looking for a better deal: He found terms with M&T Bank, which, if the comptroller is able to secure a high credit rating in the coming weeks, will save the county something on the order of \$25,000. (Collins claimed that Poloncarz's effort to open the borrowing to competitive bidding would cost the county between \$600,000 and \$900,000.) That's a modest sum, but if you're looking to run government like a business, as Collins likes to say, then any savings should be welcome. Further, it has long been the goal of the comptroller and the legislature—and, truth be told, the county executive—that county government do its own borrowing rather than rely on the control board. **Ken Vetter**, the chair of the control board, has given Poloncarz his blessing to pursue the deal. If the deal falls through, the control board can still do the necessary borrowing before the county needs the money.



Poloncarz

So, to revisit the thesis of the item we published here two weeks ago: Collins, acting like a candidate for office rather than a county executive, faults Poloncarz, the comptroller, for attempting to do his job, sending out his campaign spokesman to accuse Poloncarz of playing politics. Poloncarz succeeds in doing his job, possibly saving the county money and taking a step toward freeing the county of the control board's oversight, which costs the taxpayers. Which of these men has his eye on the people's business?